

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A network access system comprising:
 - a first network access hub communicatively coupled to a global communications network;
 - a second network access hub communicatively coupled to the global communications network;
 - an authentication engine communicatively coupled to the first network access hub and the second network access hub, the authentication engine operable to receive an initial set of credentials from a requesting user via the global communications network; and
 - an authorization engine operable to grant access to both transport services and data services in response to authorization of the first set of credentials.
2. The system of claim 1 further comprising a short-range wireless transceiver associated with the first network access hub.
3. The system of claim 2, wherein the transport services comprise wireless communication via a wireless local area network technology link.
4. The system of claim 3, wherein the data services comprise a service that provides personalized information based on an identity of the requesting user.
5. The system of claim 4, wherein a first data service is provided by a first service provider, the data services further comprising another data service provided by a different service provider.
6. The system of claim 5, further comprising a federation engine operable to maintain information that indicates members of a service provider federation, the service provider federation comprising the first service provider and the different service provider.

7. A network access method comprising:
receiving a first set of credentials; and
authorizing access to a network data service and a network transport service in
response to authenticating the first set of credentials.
8. The method of claim 7, further comprising:
receiving a request for access from an electronic device;
prompting the electronic device to send the first set of credentials;
authenticating the first set of credentials; and
communicating an authentication token to the electronic device.
9. The method of claim 8, further comprising:
requesting that the electronic device cache the authentication token;
receiving a subsequent request for access from the electronic device;
recognizing an existence of the authentication token at the electronic device; and
authorizing access in response to the subsequent request without further
authentication.
10. The method of claim 7, further comprising:
receiving a request from an electronic device seeking access to a first data service
via a first transport service;
prompting the electronic device to send the first set of credentials;
authenticating the first set of credentials;
receiving a request from a second electronic device seeking access to a second
data service via a second transport service;
prompting the second electronic device to send a set of credentials; and
authenticating the set of credentials.

11. A computer-readable medium having computer-readable data to access maintained credentials of a plurality of users, to direct an authentication engine to compare input credentials against maintained credentials, to signal an authorization engine of accepted input credentials, and to initiate communication authorizing access to both a network transport service and a network data service.

12. A computer-readable medium having computer-readable data to initiate a query to find an 802.11 network, to initiate presentation of information that indicates at least one found network, to request connection to the at least one found network, to receive an input requesting retrieval of information associated with a network data service, to receive a request for user credentials, to initiate communication of input user credentials, and to maintain an authorization token indicating a right to access both the found network and the network data service.

13. A network access system comprising:
a plurality of hotspots communicatively coupled to a broad communications network;
an authorization engine communicatively coupled to the broad communications network and operable to issue an authentication token to an electronic device communicatively coupled to at least one of the plurality of hotspots; and
the authentication token operable as a valid indicator of access rights to both transport services and data services.

14. The system of claim 13 further comprising the electronic device having a cache operable to store the authentication token.

15. The system of claim 13, wherein authentication token is a valid indicator of access rights to both transport services and data services at a second one of the plurality of hotspots.

16. The system of claim 13, further comprising:

an authentication engine communicatively coupled to the broad communications network and operable to receive an initial set of credentials from a requesting user and to compare the initial set of credentials against a maintained set of credentials;

a valid signal indicating that the requesting user is a valid user; and

a federation engine operable to initiate a sharing of information associated with the valid user with a first federated data service provider.

17. The system of claim 13, further comprising:

an authentication engine communicatively coupled to the broad communications network and operable to output a valid signal indicating that a user requesting access is a valid user and entitled to transport and data service access;

a federation engine operable to initiate a sharing of at least a portion of a valid user information file with a first federated data service provider; and

the valid user information operable to facilitate access to a federated data service without additional sign on operations by the user requesting access.

18. The system of claim 13, wherein the data service comprises a unified messaging mailbox.

19. The system of claim 18, wherein the transport service comprises access to the broad communication network via the at least one of the plurality of hotspots.

20. The system of claim 19, further comprising:
an authentication engine communicatively coupled to the broad communications network and operable to output a valid signal indicating that a user requesting access is a valid user and entitled to transport and data service access;
a federation engine operable to initiate a sharing of at least a portion of a valid user information file with a first federated data service provider; and
the valid user information operable to facilitate access to a federated data service without additional sign on operations by the user requesting access.